

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Jay Stange and I am an immigrant to the United States from Canada. I work for the Center for Latino Progress in Hartford, CT, as the coordinator for its Transport Hartford Academy program. We work to support people in the Capital region using transit, walking, bicycling or micro-mobility options like scooters by making these options more affordable, accessible, and safe.

I also offer these comments on behalf of The Center for Latino Progress, headed by Executive Director Arleen Cohen. The Center stands in support of HB 6616: "An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status." Expanding access to HUSKY regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals up to age of 26 have access to health coverage.

My family has private insurance coverage, but many of the young people we serve at the Center for Latino Progress do not because of their income and their immigration status. Our residents suffer disproportionately from asthma, high blood pressure, COPD and diabetes. We can't expect our young people to stay in school and become engaged, employed, productive members of our community unless they are healthy. Our young constituents deserve to have medical care.

We support HB 6616 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation out of committee in its current form - to expand HUSKY access to age 26. Our work does not end with expanding access up to age 12 nor with expanding access up to age 18. And that work must continue this year by expanding HUSKY access up to age 26. Looking forward, we ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Jay Stange, Coordinator
Transport Hartford Academy

Cc; Arleen Cohen, Executive Director
Center for Latino Progress